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ABSTRACT

This is a step-by-step guide to designing and conducting an assessment of the in-house use of periodicals in a library. It focuses on in-house use because libraries that allow their periodicals to circulate probably already have mechanisms to track circulation. The guide consists of an explanatory text followed by a checklist. The checklist includes the factors that need to be considered in the planning stages for such a study. Each library can customize the study, choosing the factors and methods that suit the situation. The most important decision to be made is the purpose of the study. The design of a periodical use study should reflect the decisions to be made with the data obtained. The following sections of both text and checklist are included: (1) purpose of the study; (2) scope of the study; (3) methodology; (4) data tabulation; (5) publicity; (6) staffing; and (7) pilot study. The checklist also includes a section on costs of the study. A bibliography of 49 sources is included for further information. (SLD)

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Conducting An In-House Periodical Use Study: A Checklist

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Occasional paper Series, No. 12

CONDUCTING AN IN-HOUSE PERIODICAL USE STUDY:

A CHECKLIST

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1998

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Purpose of the Study	1
3.	Scope of the Study	2
4.	Methodology	3
5.	Data Tabulation	5
6.	Publicity	7
7.	Staffing	7
8.	Pilot Study	7
9.	Conclusion	8

IN-HOUSE PERIODICAL USE STUDY
A CHECKLIST

Purpose of the Study	9
Scope of the Study	10
Methodology	12
Data Tabulation	16
Information Distribution/Publicity	23
Staffing	24
Costs	24
Bibliography	25

CONDUCTING AN IN-HOUSE PERIODICAL USE STUDY: A CHECKLIST

1. Introduction

This is a step-by-step guide to designing and conducting an assessment of the in-house use of periodicals. It focuses on in-house use because libraries that allow their periodicals to circulate will likely already have mechanisms to track circulations. This guide consists of an explanatory text followed by a checklist. An extensive, but not exhaustive, bibliography is appended. It is based on experience gained in a large academic library, and thus is most relevant to that type of institution. A large, non-circulating periodical collection is implicitly assumed, but the basic principles are the same for any periodical collection.

The checklist includes those factors that need to be considered in the planning stages for such a study. Because of the considerable amount of time and effort generally involved in such a study, and the importance of reliable results, careful planning is essential. While this checklist may not be exhaustive, it includes a wide range of possibilities. Each library can customize their study, choosing those factors and methods that suit their situation.

We recommend that sufficient time be allotted to the planning a periodical use study; six months would be the minimum lead-time required to plan a useful study. If possible, some of that time should be spent conducting a pilot study allowing enough time to make changes to the final plan before the full study commences. The best laid plans can fall apart because of unforeseen details in its execution and a serious flaw could render the results of little use for their intended purpose.

The checklist is divided into various sections that include all of the major decisions that need to be made. This introductory text will go through each section, with a brief explanation of the relevant issues that must be considered.

2. Purpose of the Study

The most important decision that must be made is the purpose of the study. The design of a periodical use study should reflect the decisions to be made with the data obtained. This objective will guide your choices regarding what part(s) of the collection will be measured, the method of measurement employed and the criteria used.

We have compiled a list of possible reasons for a periodical use study that we believe to be the most likely reasons, but something else may be relevant in your particular situation. A single study can have multiple purposes, but it is very difficult to use the data collected for a purpose that was not intended at the start. It may be better to collect more data than you need rather than less.

3. Scope of the Study

There are three areas to be considered here. First, decisions need to be made concerning the duration of the use study. For academic institutions, a full year may not be required. However, more than one term/semester is advisable because of the variation in courses offered and the researchers on campus for a given semester. The duration of the study will also be affected by the urgency of the need for the data. The date of completion of the study may need to coincide with the end of your budget year or prior to the typical time for journal subscription renewals.

Consideration must be also given to choosing the titles to be surveyed. As expected, the purpose of your study will affect these selections. For various reasons, not all titles may need to be studied. We have listed the most likely groupings. If the only purpose is to identify low use titles for cancellation, there is no point in including titles that are no longer being received. At the same time, there may be some advantages to designing a broader use survey of your holdings. Assessment of a few titles that are scattered through the library collection may create problems for staff and users, and negatively affect the reliability of your results. If all titles are included, staff will not be required to monitor only specific titles and the additional data on dead titles may provide helpful information for storage decisions.

Once titles have been identified for inclusion, a decision must be made as to the portion of the surveyed titles that are to be included. The full run of a periodical may involve hundreds of volumes, spanning decades. The purpose of the study will once again affect your choices. Many studies suggest that surveying only relatively recent holdings (e.g. last five years) will provided adequate information for cancellation decisions. However, if removal to storage or withdrawal of materials is being considered, then the use of older volumes is of greater importance.

We have listed the most likely ways of dividing up the run of a title, but local circumstances may suggest others. For instance, the most current issue is listed as a special case because some libraries shelve these issues separately from their bound volumes. Unbound issues are also more problematic than bound volumes because they are more fragile and come in a variety of sizes and formats. At the same time, for some disciplines, the most current, unbound issues are often the most heavily used. Therefore, there are special methodological concerns to be considered. It may be necessary to return to the Scope of the Study section to review the list after working through the section on Methodology. Certain methods may be more difficult to undertake for certain portions of the collection.

For some circumstances you might consider a design that involves sampling. Sampling is often chosen because it typically involves less cost and is less time-consuming. A basic explanation of sampling theory found in most introductory statistics textbooks would provide you with enough information to include the sampling of one or more dimensions in your study.

Some basic concepts that should be understood include the relationship between the **population** (e.g. your entire periodical collection) and a **sample** from that population. Based on your objectives, you might decide that from your population of titles you will only survey science titles; undergraduate students may be the only stakeholder group given questionnaires; reshelving

statistics might be tallied only at the end of each day. At the same time, consideration must be given to how **representative** the sample is to the population of interest. Surveying a sample of science titles may tell you something about the utility of your science collection as a whole, but it does not tell you anything about your English literature titles. Similarly, the undergraduate use of a periodical collection would most likely not reflect the uses of graduate students and other campus researchers.

There are several examples of sampling included in the checklist. For a **random sample**, all titles in the population have an equal chance of being included, and the sample is chosen on a completely random basis. For example, if your population was all the science titles, you would select your sample with no regard for discipline, call number, cost, etc. If you further grouped your science titles by subscription costs and each title within those cost groups had an equal chance of being included in the study, your sample would be a **stratified random sample**. Similarly, your sample of patrons surveyed may be stratified to only include first year students. Due to staffing shortages, you may decide to select a sample of time slots for reshelving tallying. The shelving schedule of the semester being surveyed could be divided into 30 minute intervals and after choosing a starting point at random, every Nth interval of time is designated as one of the time slots during which staff will tally the number of uses for each title. This is an example of **systematic sampling**.

If patrons are interviewed as they enter or exit the library, you are working with an **accidental sample** of patrons who most likely do not adequately represent your larger population of stakeholders. This approach might be helpful in the evaluating your questionnaire items or the interview training of your staff but it does not allow you the opportunity to interpret your results to make any assumptions about your local patrons. It is important to keep in mind that though sampling may save in staff time and implementation costs, the samples chosen must be representative of the population of interest to provide any valid information about that population.

4. Methodology

This is a lengthy portion of the checklist that is divided into the two headings of Collection-based and Patron-based Assessment. Collection-based Assessment is further sub-divided between the two types of objectives met by this approach.

The first part of the Methodology section on Collection-based design deals with the simplest form of study, in which the objective is merely to determine if titles are used at all. All that is required here is a way to provide a 'used/non-used' answer. Various methods are possible, and we have listed the major variations. Titles that receive no use would be candidates for cancellation, withdrawal or removal to storage. You could also identify areas of low use within the collection and possible adjustments needed to reshelving schedules. This type of study cannot provide relative rankings of titles, and thus will be of limited use if large-scale cancellations are contemplated.

The next section deals with methods of assessing the amount of use for individual titles. Use/non-use data is often only helpful the first time a periodical collection is surveyed; as budgetary or space pressures increase, it becomes more important to look at the relative positioning of titles on a scale of use. If the actual amount of use for each title is required, there are several general points to be made. If periodicals are barcoded and linked to an automated circulation system, it should be possible to collect data by wanding barcodes during the reshelving process. This is the simplest and most direct method of collecting data. If this is not possible, a more cumbersome method must be tried. However, staff reshelving data may not be the only source of use data utilized. If patron input is desired, more elaborate methods will have to be employed.

In the study that the authors planned at the University of Guelph Library, we collected use data both from reshelvers and from patrons. We found that for the vast majority of titles, the reshelve count exceeded the patron use count. This led us to the conclusion that eliminating the patron input would not have caused titles to be 'undervalued' but this pattern may not hold true for other institutions.

The evaluation of a collection through a well designed local use study can provide an objective understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of a periodical collection. In-house use or circulation statistics can identify heavily used titles that can aid in multiple copy and format decisions. Seldom used titles can also be identified as storage, withdrawal or cancellation candidates.

At the same time, the limitations of a collection-centred approach should be noted. The measurement of actual use for a given title considers each instance of use as equivalent in value. With most approaches to the measurement of use, browsing and not finding anything useful and leaving the journal issue off the shelf is equivalent to photocopying a relevant article. Some studies have questioned whether simple removal of a volume from a shelf actually constitutes a valid use.

Consideration should be given to the validity of your definition of "use". Based on the decisions that must be reached with your results, are you measuring what you say you are measuring? For example, depending on the interpretation of your results, you might want to consider all possible uses as equal or focus only on the prevalence of photocopied articles that met patrons' needs. If patron involvement is part of your design, publicity and signage might provide you with the opportunity to specify your parameters of "use" being followed.

It is also critical that the reliability of those measures be considered. Reshelving statistics can miss multiple use of one item (by the same or different patrons), particularly if reshelving is done infrequently. Patron non-compliance or instances of cheating are other possible sources of error and can adversely affect the reliability of your results. No measure is completely accurate and the presentation of your results should reflect that fact.

The next part of this Collection-based section deals with information that might be included in a data collection instrument. The amount of information that is to be included will determine the

size of the instrument. One method that has been tried at a number of institutions (including the University of Guelph) is a label of some sort that is attached to each volume or issue. Such a label must be chosen very carefully. Our experience at Guelph taught us that it is very difficult to find a label the will stick to the varied surfaces found in a library and it is even more difficult to find a label that is also easily removable at the conclusion of the study. Alternative methods of attaching a survey instrument are also included, but we have probably not exhausted the possibilities.

User-centred techniques are another approach to obtaining information to help identify important and irrelevant titles from the perspective of local patrons. Surveys or questionnaires that are administered on-site can provide additional information on the utility of a collection and can also lend insight to possible barriers to access i.e., location of materials. Depending upon the objectives of your study, surveys can be randomly assigned or targeted to a specific user group.

Drawbacks to the patron survey approach include the fact that the resulting sample may be too small to allow you to generalize your results to your larger user population. (Bremer, 1990) Also, though you may hope to canvas a representative sample, timing and survey location can affect the validity of the results. The responses obtained may not adequately reflect the needs of all user groups being served by your collection.

The surveying of patrons is very labour intensive. The design of an adequate questionnaire needs to address the issue of validity. Wording of questions should not be ambiguous. Surveys should adequately measure what you purport that they measure. If patrons are to be surveyed, staff training is critical to obtaining reliable results. The quality of your results is dependent upon each patron being interviewed in like fashion.

5. Data Tabulation

The Data Tabulation portion of the checklist has three parts. There is the assumption that the data will be tabulated using a software package because this is the fastest and easiest way to manipulate large quantities of data. For a small study that involves only a few titles, you may be able to tabulate the data manually.

The first part of this section of the checklist includes possible fields that might exist in a periodical use study database. As expected, the purpose of your study will determine the fields to be chosen. We have listed some general fields that provide title-specific information that may have local relevance. A number of use fields have also been listed, as well as possible cost fields. Few libraries would want all the possibilities listed.

Many librarians and faculty are uncomfortable with a simple cost per use ratio determined by dividing the subscription cost by the number of uses received for the duration of the study. To supplement this cost/use information, we have included items under the heading of Weighting Factors. We have suggested several simple factors that may be considered, such as indexing and availability in neighbouring institutions. We have also suggested a 'value' determined by faculty

and librarians that could involve the use of standard collection assessment tools, or locally developed rankings of serials.

Some libraries (notably Memorial University -- see Milne, in bibliography) have developed complicated formulas based on citation studies and other factors. These formulas consider the 'shelf-life' of a journal and attempt to address the noted variability in use of periodicals between academic disciplines. Some weighting factors are easily determined while others, such as local citation studies, would involve an effort equal to the use study itself. The involvement of subject specialists among the faculty and librarians in decision-making can compensate for a lack of weighting factors held in the database itself.

The second part of the Database section briefly looks at the creation of the database. We recommend downloading as much information as possible from existing library systems. There may be limitations on this process caused by your library systems or by the database program you are using to organize your data. For instance, at Guelph, the catalogue and the acquisitions databases were completely separate at the time of the study. While we downloaded title information from the catalogue, acquisitions data was entered manually.

Manual data entry is time-consuming and more likely to lead to errors in the database. However, it may be necessary in order to get all of the data that you need. Downloading of use data from an automated circulation system at the end of the study (or at set points along the way) must also be considered. With a fully integrated library system, it may be possible to generate the required data without setting up a separate database. For some situations, an integrated system might be able to export most of the data to a separate database to which other information could be added. You may need to use a translation program of some kind to convert the data from your library system to your database program. For instance, there are programs that can convert MARC format data into standard database formats. The time and effort involved in creating the basic fields may limit the information that you choose to add. If data is to be entered manually, you will probably want to only include the bare minimum number of fields.

The final part of this section looks at issues surrounding Database Software. Throughout this paper, we have used the term 'database' to refer to the organized collection of data that will result from a use study. However, use of the term does not imply that only database software will work for this type of project. Spreadsheet software can in some cases be equally suitable. Both types of programs allow large sets of information to be easily organized.

Database programs will often offer better sorting and searching features, while spreadsheets will facilitate mathematical calculations. We have attempted to list the key factors that you should consider in assessing possible software packages. An important issue not mentioned is local familiarity/expertise with a particular program. This can offset many other limitations -- a more powerful program that will require weeks to master may be of less use in the long run.

When comparing database software, you will also need to decide if you need the power and versatility of a relational database, which allows the data to be spread over several tables. Relational databases use query language to search for data and they allow you to reorganize your

data many different ways. By contrast, a flat-file database can only create one self-contained table. Flat-file software programs are more inexpensive, but will require more work in designing the database and the reports it generates.

6. Publicity

We have taken for granted that library staff need to be fully informed about any periodical use study, even if they themselves are not directly involved. Because the study could have significant impact on regular workloads, all staff need to be aware of the project and of the importance of the results.

There are distinct advantages to notifying your user group about the study, particularly in an academic environment. Both faculty and students generally appreciate the need for 'hard' data to aid in decisions about cancellations, withdrawals, and removal to storage. Their knowledge of the study will help to legitimate the use of the results. Also, even if only reshelving data is collected, public awareness of the study can help to increase accuracy by preventing patron reshelving.

If patron input is part of the study, then full publicity is absolutely necessary. We have listed a number of avenues. For academic institutions, we would suggest that a special memo to faculty, explaining the methodology and purpose of the study, is essential. Signage within the building, as well as other publicity, will help to ensure patron compliance.

7. Staffing

Staffing is an extremely important element of the study. Once again, it will be partly determined by the method chosen. If reshelving statistics are required, then regular reshelving staff must be part of the study. Different staff may be used at different points in the study. For instance, temporary staff could be hired to do data entry work, or to record information obtained by survey instruments. The pilot study (discussed in the next section) also deals with staffing considerations.

8. Pilot study

As was indicated at the beginning of this introduction, a pilot study is crucial to the success of a periodical use study. We know from experience that plans do not always function perfectly. A good pilot study should last for a reasonable length of time and should approximate real conditions as closely as possible; duration will depend on what needs to be tested. Timing of the pilot study should provide sufficient time to make any necessary revisions to the design of the full study.

Pilot studies rarely look at the entire collection to be surveyed. In choosing titles for your pilot, you may wish to select from known high-use titles because problems with the design will become more quickly apparent. Pilot study titles could also be limited to those in controlled areas or from the most frequently published titles to help test procedures for the handling of latest issues that typically require more frequent reshelving. Format of titles may be another consideration for inclusion in a pilot study.

For a collection-based assessment design, a pilot study allows you to identify any problems related to the reliability of your chosen method. For instance, if slips of paper are to be inserted into volumes as they are used, will they fall out by themselves? If you are attaching some sort of label to individual volumes or shelves, will it stay on? Can you remove used survey instruments without damage to materials? Testing of label and barcode stock will provide that information. How will you handle survey instruments that get filled up? Are procedures to handle new issues/newly bound volumes working?

Staff cooperation is vital to the success of a periodical use study. How is the workload of staff involved affected by these new/additional responsibilities? If the study causes major problems in other staff duties, it may be compromised. For instance, if reserve desk staff cannot record use without generating long delays in patron service, this part of the study will need to be redesigned. The time needed for tasks can also provide some estimate of total staff hours needed for the full study.

Will patrons cooperate with the your collection-based use study? Testing a sample of titles should give you some indication whether or not patron compliance will be an issue. Non-cooperation could involve reshelving by patrons or refusal to insert/mark survey instruments. Publicity and signage may address these concerns.

9. Conclusion

We hope that this checklist will help you in the preparation of your periodical use study. We have included an extensive bibliography of sources that discuss the practical aspects of periodical use studies and many real-life examples. A successful use study starts with a clear objective and a plan that will achieve that objective.

IN-HOUSE PERIODICAL USE STUDY
A CHECKLIST

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY (check all that apply)

- ☐ To identify low use current titles for cancellation due to budget cuts
- ☐ To identify low use titles for cancellation in order to rationalize the collection; funds can be re-allocated to better serve user needs
- ☐ To identify low-use titles or portions of titles to be sent to storage to reallocate space
- ☐ To identify low-use titles or portions of titles for withdrawal to provide space
- ☐ To identify high-use titles for possible duplicate subscriptions (in same or other format)
- ☐ To identify titles with theft or vandalism problems
- ☐ To determine use patterns to identify titles for replacement in microform (to provide more space or for preservation)
- ☐ To identify use patterns in order to make plans for resource sharing with other institutions
- ☐ To identify high-use and low-use areas of the collection for optimizing reshelving schedules
- ☐ To identify high-use areas of the collection so that more related material can be purchased
- ☐ To determine use levels in order to choose appropriate binding methods (e.g. intensively used materials receive better quality binding, some journals should not be bound at all)
- ☐ To determine use levels of titles with incomplete holdings for decisions about back issue purchases
- ☐ To gather data for fund-raising purposes (e.g. high-use titles or areas can be targeted for donations)

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

A. Duration of study

☐ One full year

☐ One full term/semester

☐ Other: _____ (See also section D on **Sampling**)

B. Titles to be surveyed (check all that apply)

☐ All titles in the collection at the beginning of the study (current and non-current)

☐ All currently subscribed titles (no non-current titles) at the beginning of the study

☐ All new titles added to the collection during the course of the study

☐ All non-current titles (no current subscriptions)

☐ All titles with subscription cost above: $_____

☐ Only titles in a certain part or parts of the collection: _____ _____ (this could be by branch library, floor or section, by call number/subject area, by budget subdivision, or be a percentage of the entire collection)

☐ Only titles indexed in library-owned databases/abstracts/indexes/current awareness services (if specific index, name here: _____)

☐ Only titles unique to your library (for purposes of resource sharing)

C. Portion of surveyed titles to be included (check all that apply)

☐ Full run (all volumes/issues) of titles

☐ Partial run (only some volumes/issues). Fill in criteria (e.g. last 5 years/volumes): _____

☐ Bound volumes

☐ Unbound issues

☐ Current unbound issues (i.e. last 6 months, last year, all in current periodicals reading room)

☐ Most current issue only

☐ All formats (e.g. paper, microform)

☐ Some formats only. Specify: _____

D. Sampling

☐ Simple random sample

☐ Stratified random sample (to ensure representation from certain subject areas, etc.)

☐ Systematic sample (every *N*th title)

☐ Time sampling (conduct survey during certain time periods only (e.g., checking all use on all titles in set for 1 week each semester or for 1 hour each day). Specify time period: _____

☐ Other: _____

METHODOLOGY

A. Collection-centred assessment

Type 1: Possible methods to use if the objective is to identify titles that receive NO use at all

- ☐ Automated record of use by wanding barcode when reshelving (barcode may be on volume/issue or on shelf or dummy)
- ☐ Slip of paper inserted in volume/issue when reshelved by staff
- ☐ Slip of paper placed in volume/issue at start of study and removed when used by library patron (slips can be collected for data if title identification is on them)
- ☐ Dot/sticker placed on spine (or cover) when volume/issue reshelved by staff
- ☐ Mark made on existing (or special) label when volume/issue reshelved by staff
- ☐ Mark made on existing (or special) label when volume/issue used by patron
- ☐ Mark made on special label on shelf when volume/issue reshelved by staff
- ☐ Mark made on special label on shelf when volume/issue used by patron
- ☐ Automated log of use of electronic journals or full-text databases
- ☐ If using a closed stack system for periodicals without automated checkout, staff track titles that are used (staff could mark a prepared list, note down titles/call numbers, or do either in an electronic database)
- ☐ For reserve readings, automated record of use by wanding barcode
- ☐ Staff track titles of reserve readings that are used (staff could mark a prepared list, note down titles/call numbers, or do either in an electronic database)
- ☐ Direct observation of patrons at periodical shelves

Type 2: Actual counts of use (for ranking purposes) are required

i. Methods

☐ Automated record of use by wanding barcode when reshelving (barcode may be on volume/issue, or on shelf or dummy)

☐ Label/survey stuck to or inserted in volume/issue to be marked when used by patron (see below for possible information to be gathered)

☐ Label/survey stuck to or inserted in volume/issue to be marked when reshelved by staff (see below for possible information to be gathered)

☐ Special label stuck on shelf to be marked by staff when reshelving

☐ Special label stuck on shelf to be marked by patron when using material

☐ Automated log of use of electronic journals or full-text databases

☐ If using a closed stack system for periodicals (without automated checkout), staff track titles that are used (staff could mark a prepared list, note down titles/call numbers, or do either in an electronic database)

☐ For reserve readings, automated record of use by wanding barcode

☐ Staff track titles of reserve readings that are used (staff could mark a prepared list, note down titles/call numbers, or do either in an electronic database)

☐ Automated log of title searches in library catalogue

☐ Automated log of title retrievals during database searches

ii. Possible information on data collection instrument
(Data collection instrument would be paper or sticker/label attached to volume/issue or shelf)

☐ Title of journal

☐ Volume/issue number, year (useful mainly if you will be tracking the data for individual years)

☐ Call number

☐ Location

☐ Format

☐ Count of use (to be marked off; e.g. 1 2 3 4 5; how many uses do you want recorded on one instrument? Will you be replacing it if it fills up?)

☐ Staff reshelves Patron use

☐ How many uses do you want recorded on one instrument (5, 10, 30?)?_____

☐ Replace data collection instrument when filled

☐ Instructions/explanation

B. User-centred assessment

i. Methods of survey distribution

☐ Hand out surveys at door, at desk, or in periodical stacks

☐ Mail out surveys

☐ Insert surveys in volumes/issues to be picked up by patrons

☐ Leave surveys near photocopiers/microform readers to be picked up by patrons

☐ Publish surveys in campus newspapers or library newsletters

☐ Interviews conducted by trained staff

☐ Hand out surveys during classes (library classes or regular classes)

☐ Sampling of specific groups (e.g. specific classes, specific departments, faculty only, graduate students only, etc.)

ii. Possible data to be collected

☐ Type of patron using material
Possibilities:

☐ Undergraduate student
☐ Graduate student
☐ Other institutional staff
☐ User from affiliated institution
☐ Faculty member
☐ Library staff
☐ Non-institutional user

☐ Time of use

☐ Date
☐ Time of day
☐ Semester/term

☐ Number of course for which material used

☐ Departmental affiliation of patron

☐ Type of use
Possibilities:

☐ Removed from shelf at some point and looked at (i.e., any use at all)

☐ Desired information found (e.g. useful article, book review)

☐ Used for class assignment/paper

☐ Used in research

☐ Scanned to stay current in the literature

☐ Photocopied

☐ Used as reserve reading

☐ Used to fill inter-library loan request

☐ What did the patron want?

☐ Was what the patron found satisfactory?

☐ What led patron to this item? (e.g. database/index, citation in prior reading, instructor recommendation, required reading)

☐ Does patron have any alternate access to this title? (e.g. personal subscription, departmental library, access to other libraries)

☐ Suggestions for additions to the collection (i.e. new titles)

☐ Suggestions for changes to the collection

DATA TABULATION

A. Database entry points (check all that apply)

☐ Title

☐ Unique I.D. number (e.g. system record number, vendor number)

☐ Title note (information about title changes, merges, etc.)

☐ Call number

☐ Location (if more than one location to be included)

☐ Circulating item (yes/no)

- ☐ Binding quality
- ☐ Title in storage (yes/no)
- ☐ Portion of title in storage
- ☐ Copy information (e.g. about number of copies)
- ☐ Format(s) held in library (i.e. paper, microform, digital)
- ☐ Format(s) available from publishers/distributors (i.e. paper, microform, digital)
- ☐ Physical space occupied by title
- ☐ Subject code (could be alphabetical part of Library of Congress call number, or single word/letter devised by staff)
- ☐ ISSN
- ☐ Status (i.e. current subscription, cancelled, gift, membership, merged/split titles) (several fields may be required for this information)
- ☐ Vendor
- ☐ Publisher
- ☐ Country of publication
- ☐ Language of publication
- ☐ Account/budget charged
- ☐ Year of first publication
- ☐ Year of earliest holdings

☐ Completeness of holdings (could use code for complete, some gaps, etc.)

☐ Last year of holdings for non-current titles

☐ Years being surveyed

☐ Frequency (number of issues per year)

☐ Number of articles per year (this could also be used as a weighting factor -- see below)

☐ Frequency/number of supplements included in subscription

Use fields:
(could have multiple fields for use during set time periods within the study)

☐ Simple indication that title used or not used (e.g., +/-, Y/N)

☐ Count of all use(single field to record use)

☐ Count of current issue use

☐ Count of bound volume use

☐ Count of use of stored volumes

☐ All patron use

☐ Patron use by category of patron (multiple fields required)

☐ Staff reshelves

☐ Count from library catalogue searches

☐ Count from automated log of electronic journals and full-text databases

☐ Count from electronic database searches

- ☐ Reserve reading uses
- ☐ ILL uses
- ☐ Photocopy request uses
- ☐ Use by type of use (multiple fields required)
- ☐ Calculated total use (sum of other use fields)
- ☐ Type of use

Cost fields:

- ☐ Subscription cost
- ☐ Cost of duplicate subscription (paper or microform)
- ☐ Type of currency
- ☐ Exchange rates
- ☐ Calculated real cost of subscription based on exchange rates
- ☐ Processing costs (can include salaries, computer costs, supplies, building overhead)
- ☐ Binding costs (can include salaries, supplies, overhead, outside vendor costs)
- ☐ Storage costs (can include salaries, computer costs, supplies, building overhead; retrieval costs, particularly for off-site storage)
- ☐ Cost of filling interlibrary loan with item (can include salaries, etc.; calculated per title based on use?)
- ☐ Average cost of titles in designated group (e.g. by subject area, call number range, associated department)

- ☐ Cost of title as percentage of budget
- ☐ Total cost (calculated field based on factors above)
- ☐ Cost per use (calculated field)

User-based fields:

- ☐ Type of patron
- ☐ Type of use
- ☐ Time of use
- ☐ Number of course for which material used
- ☐ Departmental affiliation of patron
- ☐ Suggested new title(s)
- ☐ Non-held title(s) requested via DD/ILL

Weighting fields:

- ☐ Value to curriculum/subject (designated by faculty and/or librarians); can use standard lists, other libraries' catalogues, local 'core' list, collection development policies, etc.
- ☐ Is title indexed? (name(s) of index/abstract may be relevant)
- ☐ Is title covered in table of contents/current awareness services?
- ☐ Depth/breadth of subject coverage (degree of specialization)
- ☐ Place/relevancy within discipline (e.g. emerging field, fading field, core)
- ☐ Intellectual level/intended audience

- ☐ Rating in ISI impact factors
- ☐ Citations by local faculty
- ☐ Citations by local graduate students in theses/dissertations
- ☐ Local faculty on editorial/advisory board
- ☐ Size of related campus department (# of faculty, # of graduate students, # of undergraduate students)
- ☐ Research area of great importance to the institution (e.g. best-known field, major grant area)
- ☐ Feasibility of conversion to microform (e.g. has illustrations that would convert poorly)
- ☐ Cost fluctuations (e.g. rate of price increases)
- ☐ Special subscription considerations (e.g. vendor discounts, package orders, prepayment discounts, memberships)
- ☐ Availability elsewhere (i.e. at neighbouring institutions)
- ☐ Availability through DD/ILL
- ☐ Special problems (e.g. multiple claims, high theft or vandalism rate)
- ☐ Other weighting factor determined by library: _____

B. Database creation

- ☐ Download data from library system(s)(e.g. Catalogue, Acquisitions, etc.)
- ☐ Download data from serials vendor
- ☐ Manual entry of data

C. Database software

- ☐ Can add/delete fields at any time
- ☐ Can sort on all fields if you choose
- ☐ Can sort on multiple fields (i.e. subsort)
- ☐ Appropriate sort order (e.g. check handling of spaces, special characters, alphanumeric sequences)
- ☐ Adequate field length available
- ☐ Adequate number of fields available
- ☐ Adequate record size available
- ☐ Importation of data possible
- ☐ Keyword searching possible
- ☐ Use of Boolean operators possible
- ☐ Stop word list possible
- ☐ Arithmetic calculations possible
- ☐ Flexible reporting features (i.e. can customize multiple reports)

INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION/PUBLICITY

- ☐ Meeting(s) with staff
- ☐ Memo(s) to staff
- ☐ No public announcement to any users
- ☐ Meeting(s) with faculty
- ☐ Memo(s) to faculty
- ☐ Sign at library entrance
- ☐ Sign(s) in periodical area
- ☐ Sign(s) near photocopiers
- ☐ Sign on library Question & Answer Board
- ☐ Article in campus newspapers
- ☐ Article in library newsletter
- ☐ Ads in campus newspapers
- ☐ Ads on campus radio
- ☐ Bookmarks
- ☐ Campus computer systems (e.g. World Wide Web, gopher, email)
- ☐ Initial screen of library catalogue
- ☐ Information sheets at service desks
- ☐ Communication with other institutions (e.g. collaborative partners)

STAFFING

- ☐ Current library staff
- ☐ From one department
- ☐ From several departments
- ☐ Special temporary staff to be hired
- ☐ Students
- ☐ Other temporary personnel
- ☐ Special training required
- ☐ Different staff to be used for different phases (i.e. data entry, data collection)

COSTS

Which of the following costs must you consider?

- ☐ Material costs (e.g. barcodes, labels, survey instruments, photocopying)
- ☐ Staff costs (including training)
- ☐ Hardware costs (e.g. workstation(s), printer(s))
- ☐ Software costs (e.g. database program)
- ☐ Publicity costs

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